

# South Dakota National Guard

## Public Affairs Office

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## **National Guard unit supports local, state, federal agencies**

By Spc. Rebecca Glidden - 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY, S.D. – While most South Dakota Army National Guard units focus their yearly training on missions for a combat theater, one aviation unit is honing its skills to support homeland security.

The Rapid City-based Detachment 1, Company B, 1-112th Aviation Regiment, using its UH-72 Lakota helicopters, serves alongside local, state and federal agencies in support of security defense requirements.

“We’ve spent a lot of years training at local exercises, including Golden Coyote, and a few years ago at the Sturgis Rally,” said Capt. John Barnes, 1-112th commander. “In these exercises we do a lot of law enforcement support. These agencies know our abilities, so they are able to set us up with missions that allow us to gain experience.”

Composed of a variety of technical experts including pilots, crew chiefs, mechanics and operations support personnel, the nearly 30-member unit can provide aerial reconnaissance, search and rescue support, and counterdrug assistance.

Supporting various agencies on homeland security missions gives unit members a unique experience, increases the unit’s capabilities, and builds relationships with federal, state and local government agencies, Barnes said.

“The best way that our crew can stay proficient on our equipment is by going out and doing missions,” Barnes added.

Serving and supporting law enforcement missions is not specific to the Black Hills or South Dakota as the 112th will go where aircraft are needed.

“The greatest experience that we received as a unit was when we deployed to the U.S. Southern Border to support U.S. Customs and Border Protection,” Barnes said. “We had missions every night where we found out what works, what doesn’t, and we have a hard time recreating that here in the state.”

The unit is looking forward to future opportunities.

“I am ready to deploy with a full unit, doing all of our jobs together and being able to support missions,” said Barnes. “We get everyone in one place, spending 24 hours a day together and we are all doing it to accomplish the same mission.”

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High-resolution photos are available at [www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard](http://www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard)



**130822-Z-BB320-053:** A South Dakota Army National Guard UH-72 Lakota helicopter lifts off for a training flight Aug. 22, 2013, at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City, S.D., to prepare for a mission to the U.S. Southwest border in support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to enhance the security of the southwest border. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Beck)



**130822-Z-BB320-222:** A South Dakota Army National Guard UH-72 Lakota helicopter crew conducts pre-flight checks prior to a training flight Aug. 22, 2013, at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City, S.D., to prepare for a mission to the U.S. Southwest border in support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to enhance the security of the southwest border. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Beck)



**170602-Z-TW084-0046:** Soldiers from Company B, 1-112th Aviation Regiment, South Dakota Army National Guard, load a UH-72 Lakota helicopter aboard a C-17 Globemaster at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City, S.D., June 2, 2017, as the unit prepares for their annual training. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Austin Pearce)



**170602-Z-TW084-0040:** Soldiers from Company B, 1-112th Aviation Regiment, South Dakota Army National Guard, load a UH-72 Lakota helicopter aboard a C-17 Globemaster at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City, S.D., June 2, 2017, as the unit prepares for their annual training. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Austin Pearce)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** contact the SDNG Public Affairs Office at (605) 737-6721 or e-mail [ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil](mailto:ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil)